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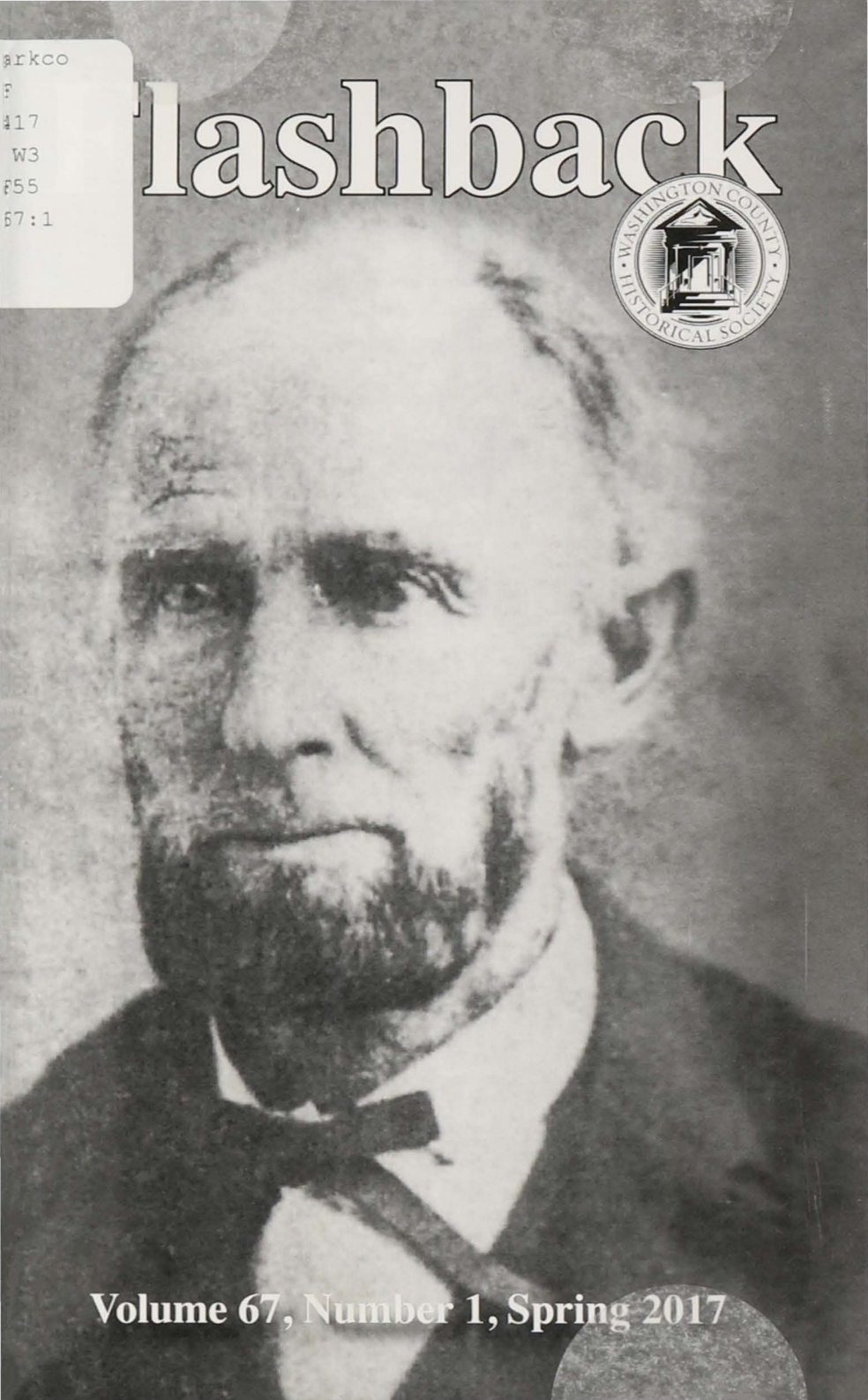
# Flashback



Volume 67, Number 1, Spring 2017

**Washington County Historical Society**
118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701
http://www.washcohistoricalsociety.org

## Submissions

*Flashback* (ISSN: 0428-5573) is published quarterly in the spring, summer, fall, and winter as an official publication of the Washington County Historical Society. Send all materials for publication to: *Flashback* Editor, Washington County Historical Society, 118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

There is no payment for articles published in *Flashback*. The editor retains the right to edit all submitted articles prior to publication.

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Members are mailed *Flashback* each quarter. Available past issues are $6 each, postpaid. Add $1 postage for issues printed in 1951 through February 1972. Web site: washcohistoricalsociety.org or headquartershouse.org.

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# FLASHBACK

Journal of the Washington County Historical Society

*Preserving Our Past for Future Generations*

Volume 67 Spring 2017 Number 1

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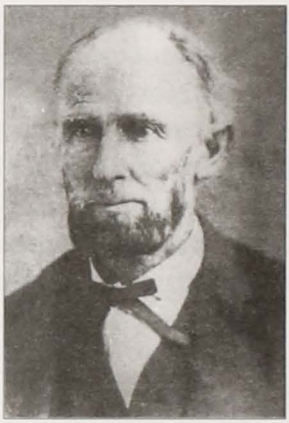

**On the Cover: William E. Quesenbury, better known as Bill Cush, was a newspaper editor, artist, poet, soldier and ardent adventurer who lived in Washington County during the years leading up to the Civil War. Read more about one slice from Quesenbury's life as told by his great-great-grandson, David Benton, starting on Page 36.**

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# Spout Spring in Memory and History

By Eric Johnson

*The memory is a living thing—it too is in transit. But during its moment all that is remembered joins and lives—the old and the young, the past and the present, the living and the dead."* — Eudora Welty[1]

*"Hence, memory as the knowing ordering or the narrative organization of the past, observes rules and conventions of narrative. For example, successful narratives about the past must have a beginning and end, an interesting storyline and impressive heroes."* — Barbara A. Misztal[2]

In 1970, Holt Rinehart and Winston published a short anthropological monograph by Peter S. Kunkel and Sara Sue Kennard entitled *Spout Spring: A Black Community*.[3] The 99-page volume, part of a series called Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology, presents the familial, social, religious, and political traditions of a small African American community in a largely white college town in the Arkansas Ozarks.

Kunkel and Kennard's book, which changed the names of its informants and transplanted them to the mythical town of Sequoyah, was based on interviews conducted between 1965 and 1968 with residents of a *de facto* segregated neighborhood located in a small valley on the southeast side of Fayetteville, Arkansas, between the historic Washington County Courthouse and the Confederate Cemetery. A year after the book was published the former Lincoln School, a WPA-era building which was one of the geographic and social cornerstones of the neighborhood, was sold to the Fayetteville Housing Authority and razed to build federally subsidized and more or less integrated low-income apartments.

Until recently, the history of African Americans in the Ozarks was little chronicled. Over the past decade Brooks Blevins, Jaime Chad Brandon, Jacqueline Froelich and Guy Lancaster, among others, have begun to fill that void. On a more local level and even more recently, the Diverse Settlers of Washington County Committee of the Washington County Historical Society has done exemplary work compiling resources and clearing a path for scholars of all sorts to pursue the county's previously hidden African American histories.[4] This work will certainly pave the way for much needed scholarship, including the eventual task of translating Kunkel and Kennard's book from anthropological treatise to a historical chronicle of a crucial transitional period for race relations in the Ozarks and elsewhere.

The main concern of this article is memory, at least more so than history. Specifically, the notions of collective and cultural memory that are something like ideas of the past given social force in the present. Fayetteville's collective memory of its past, what Jamie Brandon calls the "narration [that] conveys to its audience how the present derives from the past" elides the material history of its African American citizens, while paradoxically honoring the town's unusually peaceful mid-20th Century public school integration.[5]

Similarly, this same unevenly shared memorial narrative honors both a near-equal split between the town's contribution to the Union and Confederate Forces in the Civil War, and the Confederate dead who have, since 1872, rested in a bucolic cemetery directly overlooking the valley where the town's Black population historically dwelled. These historic and geographic ironies are too knotty to be fully untangled here, but hopefully the groundwork can be laid for a fuller and more comprehensive remembering of Fayetteville's African American community and its relation to the town and to the larger history of African Americans in the Ozarks. Kunkel and Kennard's book, if it can be decoded, could be a crucial resource in this effort. As such it functions here as a reference and guidepost.

The destruction of the Lincoln School building in 1972

marked, at the very least, the close of a chapter for the neighborhood that white Fayettevillians have long called "Tin Cup," or "The Holler," perhaps the longest-lived of the small African American enclaves that came to exist in the Arkansas Ozarks after the Civil War. Emancipation triggered a migration of former slaves out of the rural Ozarks northward and westward toward more urban areas. Many left the state and the South entirely, but others found construction and mill work in Washington and Benton counties. Fayetteville, home to one of the larger slave populations in the Ozarks before the war, grew dramatically in the decades between the end of the war and the turn of the 20th century, and Black laborers who either settled or passed through took part in the town's expansion, including the construction of the first buildings of the University of Arkansas in the early 1870s.

While there is no firm date available yet for the neighborhood's founding and demarcation as exclusively Black space, early signposts for its eventual form and character include the Reconstruction-era Freedman's school, built by and named for E. E. Henderson on the north end of the valley in 1866, and the St. James Methodist Episcopal and St. James Baptist churches, established in 1868 and 1885 respectively, along Willow street which runs north to south through the center of the valley.

Oral histories collected in 2000 suggest that small lots in the valley were sold to Black residents, who built their own houses on them beginning in the 1890s.[6] As the African American outmigration continued, abetted by violent purges in Harrison and Eureka Springs in the early 20th Century, the neighborhood grew steadily.[7] Fayetteville's construction boom abated in the early decades of the century, but Black Fayettevillians settled into domestic and hospitality work. By the 1920s, as many as 1,000 people may have been living in the little hollow, and references to Tin Cup in local newspapers were not uncommon. The name supposedly comes from a tin cup tied to a tree branch by a large spring that feeds a creek that flows through the center of the valley and eventually to the White River.

While this seems like a straightforward, if skeletal narrative, fundamental elements of it look different from different angles. Some longtime Black residents resist the name "tin cup." According to local activist Jessie B. Bryant, the spring with the cup was "the businessmen's place," where white men who worked downtown would have a sack lunch and talk. Bryant argues that "it wasn't part of the Black neighborhood at all," and that "If you mention 'Tin Cup' it's automatically a derogatory term for the people in the community. But it had nothing to do with the community."[8]

Similarly, a 1975 article in the local *Northwest Arkansas Times* written by Dr. Gordon Morgan, the first African American professor at the University of Arkansas, says: "The Black community has never really considered itself as having a separate identity from that of Fayetteville at large. It has resisted such names as the Hollow, Tin Cup, and even East Fayetteville. These names have been given it by outsiders, visitors, or persons who have had no practical knowledge of [the] history of the community."[9]

The differences in how people differently understood something as basic as the name of their community and whether it was a distinct place within the larger place of Fayetteville is less a question of history than of memory. And as such, it speaks to the difficulty of coming fully to terms with the effects of spatial segregation on the collective memory of place, because the notion of collective memory depends on an inclusive collective. As historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage argues:

> By definition, collective memory involves sharing, discussion, negotiation, and often conflict. Remembering consequently becomes implicated in a range of activities that have as much to do with identity, power, authority, cultural norms, and social interaction as with the simple act of conserving and recalling information. Groups invariably fashion their own image of the world and their place in it by establish-

> ing an accepted version of the past, a sort of genealogy of identity. Although collective memories may trace a chronology readily acceptable to people outside the group, events within that narrative are assigned an importance distinct from the significance ascribed to them by outsiders.[10]

But, just as Fayetteville's Black community does not seem to have imagined itself living anywhere but Fayetteville, Fayetteville's white community has spent much more time and energy remembering integration than the segregation that proceeded it. The town rightfully prides itself on a progressive civil rights history, centered around the Fayetteville School Board's unanimous vote to immediately comply with the United States Supreme Court's decision to integrate public schools in Brown v. Board in 1954.

This noteworthy event is regularly remembered in articles, videos, and documentaries, as well as an oral history published by the University of Arkansas Press in 2000 titled *Civil Obedience: An Oral History of School Desegregation in Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1954-1965.*[11] What's less well remembered—even in that volume—is that Fayetteville's elementary schools remained segregated until 1965, when the Lincoln School, which had replaced the Henderson Freedman's school in 1939, was closed. In fact, most of the references to elementary desegregation in that volume come in the interviews with Black community leaders Lodene Deffebaugh and Jessie Bryant.

1965 was also the year that Peter Kunkel and Sara Sue Kennard began interviewing residents of the little valley known on maps as Spout Spring Hollow, for their book. *Spout Spring* wasn't written to be a straightforward historical resource, and doesn't read like one. But it offers a detailed, if heavily refracted glimpse of a specifically Black history of Northwest Arkansas. The places named are often easy to grasp despite the pseudonyms—"Lincoln County" translates to Washington County and "Ozarka" to Arkansas for instance—and some place names (Spout Spring,

East Mountain) are actual older or alternate appellations.

There is a wealth of lightly fictionalized detail regarding institutions and activism, political and economic developments, and physical changes in the community during the years in which the ethnography took place, but the encyclopedic organizational approach thwarts immediately translation of them into a clear account of people and events. Some characters seem to be singular analogs of historical persons and are fairly easy to identify, others are composites. A fuller identification would be very illuminating, particularly regarding the internal history of Fayetteville's civil rights politics.

In the Forward, Kunkel, who collaborated with community members in an interracial Civil Rights group before starting to work on the project, claims that, after some initial suspicion, "there came to be a feeling among the Spout Spring people that this was their book, their statement to the world about themselves." But the book doesn't quite feel that way. While there are distinct attempts to set a more-familiar and less formal tone, the prose in the book often skews scientific in a way that's typical of anthropological discourse at the time, particularly in the descriptions of family relationships and culture.

In many ways it feels as if the book is both limited by the anthropological conventions of this time and as if it is working a little too hard to transcend those conventions by spicing the jargon with awkwardly casual colloquialisms. For instance, the chapter on the "Knight" family notes at one point that "Bill and Rowena have a pretty good thing going on sexually, in addition to their general compatibility in economic and family relationships."[12]

This kind of uneasy narrative positioning, and the fact that the narrator remains nameless and faceless throughout the book, imposes a distance between the reader and the members of the Spout Spring community, making them appear in the text more like the subjects of scientific study than people whose lives are being recounted. Like the Federal Writers Project interviews with former slaves conducted in Fayetteville thirty years prior,

only dialog from informants is presented in the text, obscuring the content and the dynamics of what were certainly conversational encounters. Unlike the Federal Writers Project however, no one is being interviewed by the descendants of the people who had enslaved them. In both cases, a certain kind of imaginative reading is helpful, as the situation in which the information presented was collected becomes itself crucial to understanding the information that is being presented.

In the larger context of understanding the presence and absence of African Americans in the Ozarks, one of the more intriguing sections of Spout Spring is the chapter titled "Making a Living." Here Kunkel notes that "Most Black adults in Sequoyah are wage-earners in service occupations of an unskilled or semi-skilled type," and that "There is an implicit barrier dividing jobs that have been traditionally considered Negro jobs from other occupations. Thus, until recently, there has been little competition between Blacks and Whites for jobs."

As noted earlier, African Americans who settled and stayed in Fayetteville transitioned from construction to service and domestic work. This helped avoid the kinds of labor conflicts that arose in Harrison, where Black workers were seen as competition for railroad jobs, or in Eureka Springs, where a budding tourist-oriented hospitality economy found little place for Black workers who didn't fit with the folkloric presentation of the Ozarks. But, this lack of conflict came with its own cost, as Fayetteville's African American citizens came to occupy a kind of subordinate caste position. As Sherman Morgan, longtime Spout Spring resident, restaurateur and activist painfully recounts in an oral history interview, "That's all we did, worked at the hotel and the university and shined shoes...You was boy, uncle, grandpa, you never was a man."[13]

This kind of racial caste stratification is easily hidden in the memory of Fayetteville's peaceful public school integration. It does come into sight occasionally, as when Margaret Stephan notes in *Civil Obedience* that the members of the Fayetteville School Board who voted for integration knew some of the fami-

lies who helped integrate Fayetteville High School because their mothers worked as domestics in their homes.[14]

Similarly, the collective memory of Fayetteville as an unusually racially tolerant and cosmopolitan southern town elides Lodene Deffebaugh's personal memory of night riders coming to her door as a child, and of the understanding that she and other African Americans were unwelcome on the square or Dickson Street.[15] The point here though is not to supplant one of these narratives of the past with the other. Instead, the hope is to see both at the same time, juxtaposed within the same geographically centered history, transcending what Tara McPhearson calls the "monocular logic...by which histories or images that are actually co-present get presented (structurally, ideologically) so that only one of the images can be seen at a time."[16]

While the availability of jobs—first construction and mill work and later domestic and hospitality work—and a more peaceful and tolerant (if rigidly hierarchical) racial climate played a large role in drawing African American Ozark migrants to settle in Fayetteville, another important factor was likely the presence of a school. The Freedman's school on Olive Street just north of Spout Spring Hollow was the first public school in Fayetteville, and possibly the first public school in the state of Arkansas, and the continuous presence of a school for African American children in Fayetteville from 1866 to 1965, when no other was available within hundreds of miles, surely contributed to the growth and vitality of Fayetteville's Black community.

This underscores the seismic change wrought by the closing of the Lincoln School in 1965, another event that needs to be seen through more than one lens at once. Certainly, it was a triumph for the members of Fayetteville's Black community, who had fought for full integration for over a decade after the high school was desegregated, pointing out that the education their children received at Lincoln was both separate and unequal. At the same time, as with similar school closings throughout the south, the closing of Lincoln meant displacement for Black teachers, as only two found employment in the Fayetteville

School district. It also meant a loss of a storehouse of African American memory. Few artifacts and almost no accounts of the day-to-day life in the school are available. Further, the loss of the building itself had consequential implications for the community in Spout Spring Hollow.

One of the narratives hidden in Kunkel and Kennard's *Spout Spring* book, one which practically begs for further investigation, is the story of the Lincoln School building's role in the community after the school was closed. There are extensive references to the establishment of the building as a "neighborhood center" and particularly to the work of "Joe Carter" who took over the center after a leadership conflict within the "Community Outreach Agency" (probably the Washington County Economic Opportunity Agency). While the book's non-narrative structure makes it hard to tease out an overall chain of events, the fate of the school building and of the hopes of some of Fayetteville's Black community are clear in this excerpt from the chapter on Leadership:

> Aided by OSU ["Ozarka State University"/University of Arkansas] students and some White teen-agers, the young people worked very hard to clean up the old school in preparation for its use as a community center. They succeeded in fixing it up in a very ingenious way. After completing their work, they were able to have one or two record dances in the building. Then, because of concerns about insurance liability, the Sequoyah School Board decided to withdraw their permission to use the building. This had a very disillusioning effect on the young people and drastically reduced Joe Carter's prestige. He had come to be a person who could get results from White people, but, after the Carver [Lincoln] school withdrawal, he seemed to be a person who could not be trusted. After the young people were barred from the school building they turned their anger against the building, breaking every window in it.[17]

The Spout Spring neighborhood runs approximately one-half a mile long from North to South and a quarter-mile to half a mile wide at its broadest and is tucked into a valley between Fayetteville's main business thoroughfare, College Avenue, and Mount Sequoyah, the eastern and southernmost of the seven large hills among which the town sits. East Rock Street, which runs east and west across the center of this area, is bookended by two memorials that illustrate how race, memory, and public space intersect on this site.

One is a very small park at the corner of Rock and Mill streets, next to the Spout Spring stream. The park is just large enough to host a single park bench and a small rock monument dedicating the park to Ralph "Buddy" Hayes. Buddy Hayes was a jazz musician who lived just outside the Spout Spring area and played extensively for both Black and white audiences around Northwest Arkansas from the 1930s through the early 1960s. Although well-known in his time, Hayes was largely unrepresented in Fayetteville's arsenal of collective memory until he was profiled in a 2014 documentary film about Fayetteville. The plaque on the monument lists only Hayes' birth and death years (1916-1973) and the year of the park's establishment, 2003.

One photo in the archives of the Fayetteville Public Library shows him standing with a white man near a piano, and two more show him at work shining shoes at a barber shop on Dickson Street, the town's college drag. There are newspaper clippings available that list his performances and his passing, but the larger narrative of his life, especially his life in the neighborhood where he lived, away from the stages where White Fayettevillians saw him perform, is unrecorded. Interestingly enough, there doesn't seem to be a clear stand-in for Hayes in Kunkel and Kennard's text, as the only musician mentioned is "Bobby Cummings, a handyman in an apartment complex who moonlights as a jazz drummer on evenings and weekends."[18]

On the other end of East Rock street, atop the eastern ridge of Mount Sequoyah, sits the Confederate Military Cemetery, established in 1873 and maintained to this day by the Southern

Memorial Association. The cemetery sits on a roughly 3-acre plot surrounded by a stone wall. A statue of a confederate soldier stands in the middle of the cemetery, looking south past the neatly regular rows of simple white gravestones to the valley below.

There is a wooden gazebo, and many trees, lending the space a sheltered and contemplative aura. Large metal plaques which outline the cemetery's history and list the many local donors who support it adorn the wall next to the wrought-iron gate. The Southern Memorial Association's website offers a more extensive history, detailing the volunteer efforts that resulted in the creation of the cemetery, the transport of Confederate soldiers' remains from across Northwest Arkansas, the ceremonial dedication of the grounds, and the high points of the community's engagement with the cemetery over the ensuing decades.

On a page titled *Why Southern Men Fought*, the Southern Memorial Association website offers this explanation of the events that led to the need for this graveyard and so many others across the United States:

> Hoping to settle the troubles peacefully, the South attempted to secede and form its own country, just like many of their ancestors had done in 1776. They would win independence from Northern rule and then govern their own country as they saw fit. Conducting secession conventions in each Southern state legislature, they declared their independence and formed the Confederate States of America.
>
> The "War of the Rebellion" commenced with the invasion of Northern troops to force the South back into the Union.
>
> Why do I care about the Confederate Cemetery? Because I wish to continue the goal of the founding ladies, to preserve a beautiful resting place for the men in gray who defended hearth and home from an invading army.[19]

Of course, the explanation given in *Why Southern Men Fought* is at odds with historical consensus and established record regarding the causes of the war and its local and national complications. The Southern Secession conventions to a one affirmed that they were motivated by the desire to preserve slavery, meaning that those "hearths and homes" that Southern men were defending included those maintained by human chattel.

The Civil War in the Ozarks of northwest Arkansas and southern Missouri was marked by vicious, sustained guerilla warfare on both sides. Fayetteville yielded nearly as many Union officers as Confederates, and was burned by retreating Confederate troops from southern Arkansas in 1862. The only invasion it resisted was one mounted by Confederate forces in 1863, who entered the town from the southeast, through the valley that would be the future home of the Spout Spring neighborhood.

Contesting these claims on historical grounds misses the point though, because like the cemetery it seeks to explain, *Why Southern Men Fought* is more concerned with cultural memory, the fixing and elaboration of collective memory through cultural artifacts and events, than with history. As Jamie Brandon, a historical archeologist who has written extensively about the Arkansas Ozarks, notes: "In the years following Reconstruction through the early decades of the twentieth century the memory of the Civil War was transformed across America and in the Ozarks via public art, historical preservation and popular culture."[20] This is the manufacturing point for the memory of the war that has haunted not just Fayetteville, not just the Ozarks, but as seen in 2015's battles over the flying of the Confederate flag in public spaces, over the South itself.

Just as scholars have begun to trace the history of Ozark African Americans in the last decade or so, others — educators, activists and ordinary citizens — have made efforts to make Fayetteville's cultural memory more inclusive. The aforementioned Buddy Hayes Park is one such effort. Another is the restoration of the Oaks Cemetery, a segregated African American Graveyard on South Dunn Avenue. The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History in

Springdale and the Washington County Historical Society have partnered in efforts to publicly memorialize local African American history. Perhaps the most significant front of local resistance to Confederate memorial mythology was opened in 2005 with the completion of the Walker Park Mural.

Spearheaded by local artist and educator Joanne Kaminsky and illustrated by a bevy of local artists, the mural, which is located in a park just a few miles south of Spout Spring, depicts scenes and noteworthy individuals from South Fayetteville's racially and economically diverse history. This includes a significant number of individuals from the Spout Spring community, including Lodene Deffebaugh and Jessie Bryant. It also depicts the catalpa tree that sits at the edge of Buddy Hayes Park by the Spout Spring stream itself, and a church on the mural's north side cites the historic churches of Fayetteville's Black community. Now, just as in the years after Reconstruction, cultural memory is manufactured through public art.[21]

As their presence in the Walker Park Mural attests, the people who lived in the Spout Spring Hollow created their own meanings for the place where they lived through the simple acts of their daily lives, quietly but stubbornly resisting the memory of the fallen Confederates in whose shadow they lived. Much has changed in that valley since the Lincoln School closed, but some of the people remain. While this is still true, we should seek them out, hear their stories, and help build a collective memory of Fayetteville that is truly collective.

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12. Kunkel and Kennard ibid.. chapter titles: 38-50, quotation: pg. 26.
13. Froelich, Jacqueline, ibid.
14. Adams, Julianne Lewis and Thomas DeBlack, ibid. p.82.
15. Ibid.
16. Mcpheasson, Tara. *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South.* 2003. Duke UP, Durham. p.6.
17. Kunkel, Peter and Sara Sue Kennard. Ibid. P. 68.
18. Kunkel and Kennard. Ibid., 80. It's quite possible that "Bobby Cummings" was a doppelganger for Robert "Jojo" Thompson, a pianist and singer (and cousin of Buddy Hayes) who performed with Hayes' band when he was young, and who later led his own bands, playing in many popular nightspots in Fayetteville in the 1980s and 1990s.
19. Schweider, Donna. *Why Southern Men Fought.* Southern Memorial Association. 2012. Available at: http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~arsma/why.html. Accessed May 1, 2016.
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21. A detailed and fascinating key to the mural, and a brief account of its construction, can be found on the City of Fayetteville website. http://www.fayetteville-ar.gov/DocumentCenter/View/741. Last accessed May 1, 2016.

# Call for Submissions: Prize for Writing Articles on History of Washington County

The Washington County Historical Society announces the ninth annual competition for the Walter J. Lemke Prize and the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize with a call for articles.

Topics can be on any phase of Washington County's history or archeology, deal with an individual or institution connected with the county, and can address any time period. The competition is open to professional and amateur historians alike.

A $250 prize is offered in each of two categories: the Walter J. Lemke Prize for best article about Washington County history with preference given for subjects outside of Fayetteville; and the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize, with preference given for best article related to Fayetteville. Winners will be recognized at the society's annual meeting each October.

Manuscripts will be judged on their contribution to the expansion of the county's history; the originality of the subject; and, the use of primary and secondary sources. The manuscripts must be original material, and must not have been previously published; no more than 40 pages, typed, preferably with endnotes, which do not count toward the 40-page limit. The title page should contain the heading "WCHS PRIZE," the full title of the manuscript, the author's name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address.

Entries become the property of the Washington County Historical Society and will not be returned to the author. All submissions will be considered for publication in *Flashback*. The historical society reserves the right to award one or no prizes.

Copies of all entries in the Lemke Prize will be deposited with the Special Collections Department at the University of Arkansas Libraries. Entries may be mailed to Lemke Prize, Washington County Historical Society, 118 E. Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701, or e-mailed to charlie.alison@gmail.com by June 30, 2017.

For additional information on the prizes, please contact Charlie Alison at the above mailing address, at 575-6731 or at charlie.alison@gmail.com.

# A Biography of Fenner Stice

*The following article, "A Biography of Fenner Stice" by James E. Stice, was the winner of the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize for best historial article about a subject related to Fayetteville history.*

By James E. Stice

My father, Florence Fenner Stice, was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 26, 1895. He was the third of three sons born to Flora Estelle (Clayton) "Stella" Stice and James Lincoln "Jimpop" Stice.

In St. Louis the morning of May 27, 1896, was overcast, and the weather forecast called for "partly cloudy conditions favorable to local thunderstorms." Spring storms were reported throughout the Midwest: in Fort Scott, Kansas; Deadwood City, South Dakota; Mound City, Illinois; and elsewhere.

Late in the afternoon, clouds rolled up from the south and west, and it became as dark as night. The cyclone (tornado) hit at 4:50 p.m. In less than 15 minutes, it cut a seven-mile swath through the heart of the city.

Dad's black nursemaid, Hagar, had taken my nine-month-old father for a streetcar ride, and they were about seven blocks from his house at 3860 Shaw Avenue when the cyclone reached them (they were close to Lafayette Avenue). Dad's mother, Stella Stice, was calling on the Bezners in Clifton Heights, Missouri, about three miles west of the Stice's home. His father, James Lincoln Stice, was in Chicago.

Hagar placed Dad on the floor of the streetcar and crouched over him on hands and knees. Something heavy landed on her back and some object smashed into Dad's right knee. She picked him up and struggled to the house through the wreckage left by the storm. The house was locked, and so she lay down on the

PHOTO COURTESY JAMES E. STICE

**Fenner Stice, then the manager of the Fulbright Wood Products Company, at his desk in the Fayetteville office.**

porch with Dad in her arms. Stella found them there when she finally got home about 10:30 p.m. She arrived by horse and buggy, as the streetcars were all out of commission.

Hagar was badly hurt, and died several days later. Dad's knee got worse as the days went by, and all medical treatments failed. (The diagnosis was "tuberculosis of the bone" — I believe that would now be called osteomyelitis.) When he was four years old, his right leg was amputated above the knee.

The storm destroyed most of the city's South Side and nearly all of East St. Louis. It tore off the Illinois approach to Eads Bridge and 16 steamboats, five ferry boats and other river craft were torn from their moorings, lifted from the water and dashed to pieces on the bridge piers and granite pavements, killing those who were aboard.

More than 250 people died in the storm, and more than 1,000 were injured. Property losses were estimated at $13 million. (Information above was obtained from one of Dad's letters, plus accounts printed in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* of Thursday, May 28, 1970, and in the *West County Journal* — a suburban newspaper — of September 21, 1977.)

I don't know much about Dad's activities during the next several years. He had a fairly normal childhood, as far as I can tell. He got an artificial leg, and did what most boys did — he played baseball, batting and playing various base positions — but someone had to run for him. He could ride a bicycle on the flat or downhill, but he obviously couldn't pump uphill very well. He seems to have been on good terms with his two brothers, Marc Andrew, 8 and a half years older than he, and James Clayton, 4 and a half years older. He was his mother's favorite, no doubt because of his handicap — all three boys were very fond of both their parents, and remained so throughout their lives. There was a special bond between Fenner and Stella, however.

One winter when he was seven or eight years old, he and some of his friends jumped on an ice wagon and helped themselves to the ice chips — these were always a by-product of the service that the ice companies provided for customers who had

"iceboxes" on their routes. The wagons were big drays, with iron-shod wheels. When the boys had had their fill, they hopped off again, but Dad slipped on the frozen ground and fell under the iron-shod wheels of the wagon. One of the wheels ran over his artificial leg, severing it. The iceman, hearing the shouting of the other boys, looked down and saw Dad lying on the ground, with part of his leg off to one side. The poor man fainted dead away. But Dad had no real injury. He got up, dusted himself off, and hopped off home. If I know my grandfather, Dad spent an uncomfortable night back home!

He attended Central High School, P.S. 120 in St. Louis, and he and his various friends were involved in an arbitrary number of scrapes. His friends included Art Kirschbaum, Wentworth Gaston, Seth Herndon, Joe Reisman (later a band leader of some national reputation), Walter Stoessel, and Ed Queeny. (There was also a fellow who later was a person of interest to various law enforcement agencies, and whose name I have forgotten.) Ed Queeny's middle name was Monsanto, his mother's maiden name. During World War I, Ed's father, who ran a coal yard, was funded by the U. S. government to build a plant for the destructive distillation of coal to produce coal tar dyes, benzene and toluene for the war effort, the supplies from Germany having been cut off. After the war, the Queenys acquired the plant for a song, and it ultimately became Monsanto Chemical Company, with Ed Queeny as the president and general manager.

While in high school, Dad made a deal with his father, James Lincoln Stice, to buy a motorcycle so that he could get around the city better. He would work to earn enough to put up half the money, if Jimpop would put up the other half. Jimpop agreed, and Dad worked weekends and summers at a coffee shop, where he sold coffee beans. The shop had a lot of different kinds of coffee beans, and he'd advise customers about possible purchases, take their orders, weigh up combinations of various beans according to customers' wishes, and grind the beans (if they wished). After a time he had saved enough money to buy an Indian motorcycle with Jimpop's matching funds, and his horizons

were appreciably widened. He, Kirschbaum, and some other friends roared around town on their bikes, sampling the flavor of the various neighborhoods and often drawing mild rebukes from the uniformed constabulary.

The motorcyclists were big on racing, and Dad became a force to be reckoned with among the contestants. One time he and some friends signed up for a race from St. Louis to Columbia, Missouri, and my information was that "Doc" Stice was favored. Unfortunately, about one mile into the race, Dad's Indian konked out — it turned out that someone had put sugar in his gas tank — a left-handed compliment to his prowess. He later replaced the Indian with a Harley-Davidson.

He was the only person in either P.S. 120 High School or the local Turnverein who could do the "Iron Cross." This was a routine on the free rings whereby the gymnast grabbed the rings and drew himself up into a position where his arms were horizontal and the rest of his body erect. He had to maintain that position for a period of time. Of course, the fact that he didn't have the weight of two legs gave him an advantage.

Nevertheless, that's a tough routine.

My grandfather was a post office inspector for the U. S. Postal Service, and always wanted to be a lawyer. He hoped one of his sons would go into the law. His oldest son, Marc, wasn't a promising candidate. Marc had been thrown out of several Presbyterian men's schools — he was not a scholar, and had a pretty mischievous streak. He went to Panama and did some sort of work connected with the construction of the Panama Canal. Later he was a barker with various carnivals. In the mid-1930s he became Postmaster at Fayetteville, Arkansas, and was active on the team that successfully petitioned the U. S. Congress to locate a Veteran's Hospital in Fayetteville. He had fought in World War I, I believe, and was a member of the Arkansas National Guard, achieving the rank of major, and becoming the executive officer of the 142nd Field Artillery. He married Sarah Hall in Fayetteville on March 10, 1921, and they had one daughter, Isabelle. During World War II, he accompanied the unit to Fort Sill, Oklahoma,

and trained many artillery units. After the war, he became the director of the Veteran's Administration in the Philippine Islands, stationed in Manila. He retired to Fayetteville, then he and Sarah moved to Oklahoma City to be near Izzie, their daughter, where he died on March 8, 1974. Sarah died on August 17, 1981. Both are buried in the Veteran's Cemetery in Fayetteville.

Uncle Clayton, a very smart man, wasn't a scholar either, and he wasn't interested in a career in law. He was educated in St. Louis and Galena, Kansas, public schools. He excelled in track and basketball at McKinley High School in St. Louis, where he won many medals. He played professional basketball for a couple of years after graduating from high school, and then went into banking in St. Louis, beginning at the Mississippi Valley Trust Company, and later moving to the Mercantile Bank and Trust Company, where he became an investment banker. He and a group from that bank formed the Metropolitan St. Louis Company, an investment firm. This was the source of the nickname Fenner and Joe Upchurch (Fenner's son-in-law) hung on him — "the Broker." He was a member of many banking boards, the St. Louis Better Business Bureau, the St. Louis Municipal Opera Board, and several boards affiliated with the Webster Groves Presbyterian Church. He was widely read and continually astonished me with his erudition.

He married Blanche Jeanette Kost of St. Louis on November 10, 1915.

She graduated from McKinley High School in St. Louis and then attended Washington University Art School. She was abroad with a chaperone when World War I broke out. She met Clayton Stice at a house party. She was a Red Cross volunteer in World War I, and wrapped bandages for U.S. servicemen, worked in the Canteen at St. Louis Union Station, and served as a U.S.O. volunteer in World War II. She suffered from high blood pressure for many years, and died April 28, 1975, at the age of 80.

Clayton was an outdoorsman, enjoying golf, hunting, fishing and skeet shooting. During World War II he was in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve in St. Louis. He was a Mason and a Shriner. After

retirement he took up landscape painting and learned to play the accordion. He suffered several strokes, and died on May 9, 1987, at the age of 97.

Both James Clayton and Blanche are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Kirkwood, Missouri. The couple had two children, Nancy Clayton Stice and James Oliver Stice.

Fenner graduated from PS 120 High School and was chosen to attend college and law school by Jimpop. He first majored in the business curriculum, taking courses like economics, bookkeeping, finance, insurance, etc. (He also took French, building upon the four years of French he had taken in high school.) Later he entered law school. He found he didn't enjoy the study of law, although he made good grades — as a matter of fact, he made Phi Alpha Delta, the law school honorary fraternity. But he wasn't committed to the work — he particularly hated the Greek course he had to take. When he finished the course (with a grade of D) he bought a round of drinks for the brothers [he was a member of the Kappa Sigma social fraternity, also Theta Nu Epsilon (campus leaders) and Phi Mu Alpha (music)], and affixed the textbook to the wall of his room with a six-penny nail.

When the United States got into World War I, he decided to volunteer, being bored out of his skull with law school. He was unable to join the regular armed forces because he had only one leg. But he knew French, he was young and idealistic, and he wanted to avoid more law classes. So he joined the American Red Cross. He said later that there were several thousand officers in the ARC — and two enlisted men. He was one of the two enlisted men (ARC No. 4916).

I'm unable to pinpoint when he shipped out to France — I'm guessing it was in November 1917. He eventually arrived in Paris. Shortly afterward, he went out on an ambulance call, and arrived at a battalion aid station, where they waited for their turn to load up casualties. It was humid and overcast, and he heard thunder and saw flashes of lightning. He commented that it looked like it was going to storm. His colleagues asked why he thought so. He said, "Well, the lightning and thunder." A dour

PHOTO COURTESY JAMES E. STICE

**Fenner Stice served in France in the Red Cross during World War I.**

Scot in the group said, "Och, ye dam fool — them's the guns!" (Welcome to the war!)

He was an ambulance driver for a time, but his command of French and his business background resulted in his being sent to Paris as a member of the Red Cross supply base. After a time, he was forwarded to Marseille, and he was there when the Armistice was signed. Elsewhere I have recorded the text of surviving letters he wrote home to his parents in St. Louis. He boarded the French Line's ship "Lorraine" at Bordeaux on January 18, 1919, to return to the United States. He lacked only three semester hours to complete his law degree at Mizzou, but decided not to finish it up. (He later said that he never wanted to practice law, but he found that the education was very valuable to him in his later professional life.)

His father was a post office inspector, but he retired in 1916 because of his increasing deafness. He bought a handle manufacturing company in Fayetteville, Arkansas — the Charlesworth Handle Company, that made hickory handles for hammers, hatchets, sledgehammers, drift picks, broad axes, single- and double-bitted axes, canthooks, oak plow handles and ash baseball bats. Fenner, single, decided to go there to help out, and quickly integrated with the young men of the town. He became friends with Bill Fulbright, the son of one of the town's first families, and later the president of the University of Arkansas and still later a member of the United States Senate; with Henry Tovey, the pianist who founded the University of Arkansas' music department, was one of the founders of the Fayetteville Rotary Club in 1921, and wrote the music for the University of Arkansas "Alma Mater"; and the members of the local Rotary Club. He was interested in radio, and opened a radio and battery shop on Block street, just north of the Square.

One night, he went to a party at Fulbright's home on Mount Nord. At that party, he met a young woman from Clarksville, Arkansas. (He couldn't dance, obviously, but he would sit out a dance with ladies, having a punch or a coffee with them and engaging in conversation.) That lady was my mother, Charlotte

Anderson, called "Chatty" by everyone. When she went back to her sorority house, Zeta Tau Alpha) she told her roommate, "I'm going to marry that man!" And she did. They were married in Clarksville on October 24, 1924.

He remembered fondly his stint as the announcer for the fledgling KUOA radio station. (He had a really low voice — we'd call it *basso profunda*. My voice is low — but his was an octave below mine.) He and Henry Tovey did the first broadcast from KUOA, located in the lobby of the Washington Hotel in Fayetteville, on the southwest corner of the square. Tovey was going to play Rachmaninoff's C sharp minor concerto, and Dad announced, "Professor Henry Tovey will play the C sharp minor concerto by Sergei Rach-man-IHN-off." Tovey grumbled, "Not Rach-man-IHN-of, you son of a bitch — it's Rach-MAHN-i-noff! I know him, and he'd be offended!" And that went out on the air!

Dad used to tell a good story about Tovey, possibly partly apocryphal. In the 1920s and 1930s, Fayetteville was on the circuit of Sol Hurok's "Community Concerts." One of the groups that visited was the Don Cossack Chorus, a Russian men's chorus. On one of their visits, Tovey was their host after they had given their performance. He was an excellent cook, and prepared caviar, borscht, blini, smoked salmon, shashlik etc. And vodka — lots of vodka. After dinner, he taught them to play poker. They were entranced.

Three days later, the chorus was scheduled to give a concert in Tulsa. They didn't show up. The Tulsa hosts frantically called Fayetteville to try to locate the group. It turned out that they were still at Tovey's house, sleeping on the floor or anywhere, in between poker games and shots of vodka! They went on their way, but they stipulated to Hurok later that their contract would always include visits to Fayetteville!

During the Depression, things got tough. The radio-battery shop closed, and Dad threw in with Jimpop to form the Stice Stave Company to make staves and heading for bourbon barrels — prohibition had ended, and the distillers needed barrels in which to age their products. White oak barrels were preferred

— but first-growth white oak was getting really rare. Dad ran stave mills in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and other regions of the Kiamichi Mountains of Oklahoma. That wasn't a great place for peace-loving people — the likes of Pretty Boy Floyd were there, as well as other less-than-savory chaps from the surrounding area. There was a lot of moonshine distilled in those hills, and the entrepreneurs engaged in this enterprise were not over-sociable with strangers!

One day Dad approached a farm on which there was a stand of first-growth white oak, which he wished to buy. He announced his presence by hallooing the house (one didn't go up on the porch and knock on the door — folks preferred to see callers far enough away that they could get their guns if they didn't feel hospitable). A woman came out, with her dog, a sizeable mutt of uncertain pedigree. They discussed the white oak stand, while the dog sniffed Dad and seemed bored. Suddenly his back hairs stood up and he bit Dad in the leg — he said it sounded like a pistol shot, and nearly knocked him down. The dog yelped and high-tailed it around the house. Dad told the woman that she ought to restrain that hound — one of these days, he was going to hurt someone! She was surely scared, and agreed to sell the timber. That night, at his room in a little "tourist court" in Tahlequah, he used a pair of needle-nosed pliers to remove the dog's teeth from his artificial leg! Yep, the dog had bit into the wooden leg and donated his dentures — the second time the artificial leg had headed off serious injury.

In the late 1930s, Bill Fulbright approached Dad about joining the J.H. Phipps Lumber Company (which his family owned) to be the bookkeeper. Dad jumped at the chance, and had an assured paycheck for the first time in years. (He wasn't sorry to give up the stave mill business!) A couple of years later, he succeeded the manager, John Clark, and served as manager until he retired in about 1965. During his tenure, the company never suffered a loss, a record of which he was very proud.

The James H. Phipps Lumber Company started in 1896 in St. Paul, Arkansas. In 1900 the plant and offices were moved to Fay-

PHOTO COURTESY JAMES E. STICE

**A Fulbright lumber mill near Tahlequah, Oklahoma.**

etteville. I don't know when the name was changed to Fulbright Wood Products Company, but it was after 1945, I think.

The company made a variety of wood products, mostly of oak, although they also made items of hickory. For instance, they made plow handles, hay-baler blocks, spokes for wagon and buggy wheels, felloes (for wagon wheels), half-rims for a variety of sizes of wagon wheels, wagon wheel hubs, wagon tongues, grass boards and raddle slats for gleaners and reapers, single-trees and double-trees for wagon harness, truck stakes and bows, etc.

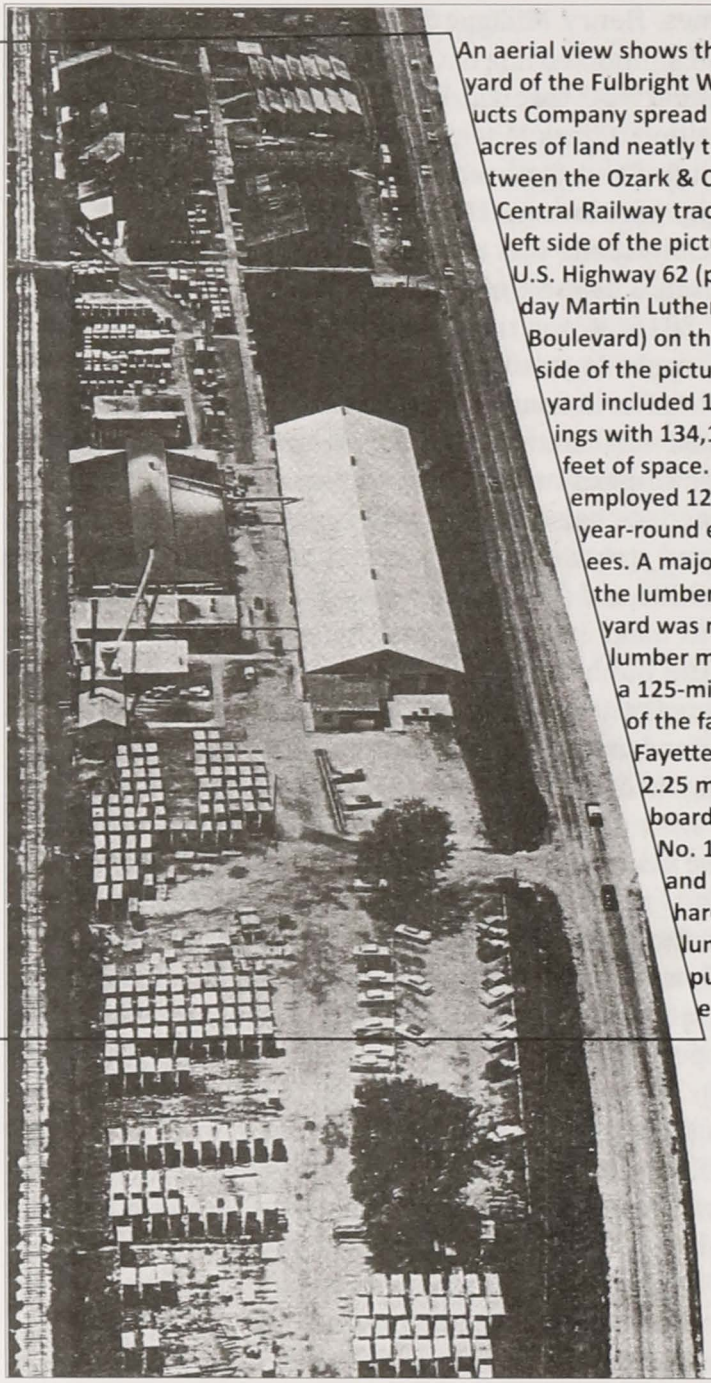
In 1940 the Fulbrights bought the Springfield Wagon Company of Springfield, Missouri, and it took about a year for all the stock and equipment to get moved to Fayetteville and installed. The wagon business went great guns for awhile. After the end of World War II, a lot of surplus jeeps and rubber-tired wagons became available from Army surplus, and John Deere, McCormack and Caterpillar tractors began to be plentiful. The tractors and Jeeps were easier to take care of than horses, and the rubber-tired carts and wagons didn't get mired down in muddy fields

like narrower-tired wagons did. The farm wagon business dried up pretty fast, and Phipps got out of the farm wagon business in 1955.

I don't know just when the company got involved with Edward Durrell Stone and the up-scale furniture business — I'd guess in the early 1950s. Dad saw the handwriting on the wall about the wagon business, and he was worrying about what the company could do to survive. He tried several things, and the Stone furniture was one of them. Unfortunately, I left Fayetteville in 1949 to go to graduate school in Chicago, and I was gone five years, so I missed out on a lot of this.

Parenthetically, I should interject that Bill Fulbright and Roberta Fulbright, his mother, were not busting to make a lot of money from that company. The family was well-fixed — they owned the Coca Cola bottling plant, real estate, the newspaper, etc. They both felt a certain obligation to the people who worked for them. Those people maybe didn't have much education, but most were intelligent, they knew their jobs, had considerable skill, and worked hard. Bill and his mother wanted to keep the plant going if they could, and didn't expect a big return. Dad was a good manager and a good planner, though, and they didn't lose money in any of the years he ran the company.

The Stone furniture was only a qualified success, I think. It was certainly well-built — it was heavy, and very sturdy. I remember they made chairs, with seat and back out of woven split-hickory panels; a square coffee table made of concentric squares of 2-inch by 2-inch oak pieces; a similar rectangular table that was about 2 feet by 6 feet; an oak chaise longue, with your body supported by cloth straps; a square bridge table with tapered legs of square cross-section (I have one of these); a three-panel screen made of woven split-hickory panels; square end tables like the bridge table, but lower and smaller; etc. I think they had a show-room in New York City, and another at Butler Brothers in Chicago's Merchandise Mart. These pieces were pretty massive, and also pretty expensive. I think Ed Stone intended them for hotel lobbies, corporate offices, and the like. They were really



An aerial view shows the factory yard of the Fulbright Wood Products Company spread across 12 acres of land neatly tucked between the Ozark & Cherokee Central Railway tracks on the left side of the picture and U.S. Highway 62 (present-day Martin Luther King Boulevard) on the right side of the picture. The yard included 18 buildings with 134,180 square feet of space. The yard employed 125 full-time year-round employees. A majority of the lumber at the yard was milled at lumber mills within a 125-mile radius of the factory in Fayetteville, with 2.25 million board feet of No. 1 common and better hardwood lumber being purchased each year.

Charles Eames, Henry Miller, etc. It was all well-made, and all expensive.

From January 10 through February 16, 2011, a retrospective exhibit titled "Ozark Modern — Edward Durrell Stone's Fulbright Furniture" was featured at the Fine Arts Center Gallery of the University of Arkansas, curated by Catherine "Kat" Wallack. (Parenthetically, there was a similar exhibit being held at the Blanton Museum at the University of Texas in Austin, through January 17, 2016. It was titled, "Moderno: Design for Living in Brazil, Mexico and Argentina," and was curated by The Americas Society in New York. Some of the items shown included furniture very much like Stone's, including square coffee tables made of concentric squares or rectangular pieces of 2-inch by 2-inch pieces of wood, a chaise longue with cloth straps, panels made of woven wood strips, etc.)

In the 1950s and 1960s the company developed contracts with Sears to make bunk beds, gun racks, and other items for the home. The bunk beds had half-wagon-wheels at head and foot, and were both one bunk high, and two bunks high. The gun racks were for hanging on the wall — there were pegs to lay the guns on, and a drawer below for ammunition (with locks). I think there were also little desks and tables for small persons' rooms. These items were sturdy, but nearly as heavy as the Stone furniture, and I think the company did well with them.

The last item Dad conceived of was a hobby horse — the horse's body was fairly soft plastic, it was suspended by four very strong springs, and the whole thing was on a red-oak base, waxed and polished. He called it the "WondaHorse" (or "WonderHorse"?). They cost about $150-$200, as I recall. We got one for our daughter, and my son rode the range on it after Susie outgrew it. That thing really gave a great ride — I think it was an inspired toy! It lasted a long time, and all the kids (my sister's, too) remember it. My dad retired in 1962, I believe, and was succeeded by Frank Lee. At the time, the company officers were:

President: Sen. J. W. Fulbright

Vice President and Manager: F. F. Stice

Secretary-Treasurer: Hal C. Douglas

Beginning in the late 1930s Dad started joining his old classmate, Wentworth Gaston, for fishing and deer hunting trips in South Texas. Wentworth had done very well in the oil business, joining Mr. Dan Harrison Sr. in the Indiola Oil Company, and bringing in the Old Ocean oil field. They went fishing for tarpon every summer at Port Aransas, and had good luck. Dad caught some really big fish. Tarpon fishermen don't keep their catch because tarpon are mostly bone, thus not fit to eat. They bring the fish up to the boat, take a scale from the fish, and release it. Two of his tarpon scales are still on the wall of the lobby of the Tarpon Inn in Port Aransas, and all the extended family who find themselves in Port Aransas for whatever reason, visit the lobby to find them and pay homage. Wentworth secretly had one of the tarpon mounted (I think it was 5-feet 6-inches long, a worthy fish), and it is now in the possession of Clayton Stice, his grandson.

The deer hunting trips were also memorable. They occurred at Mr. Dan Harrison's ranch, the 7PL, in Brazoria County. One day, Dad and Wentworth were coming back from an early-morning hunt when they stopped for something, and Dad got out of the right side of the Jeep in which they were riding. As he hopped out, a really big diamondback rattler struck him in the leg — fortunately, the right leg — again! Wentworth shot the snake to rags with a .30-06, and it was reported to be six feet long and as big around as your arm! Back at the bunkhouse, Dad hauled out the needle-nosed pliers and pulled the snake's fangs out of the leg. That's three times that leg was assaulted. It seems it was fated that he lose it back in St. Louis all those years ago, after the cyclone.

Dad loved to play poker, and he was a good player. He and a group of his friends played once a month, on Saturday night, and their wives played bridge at the same time. They named their poker club "The Saturday Evening Society for the Furtherance of Psychic Research," a portentous title. They rotated the location among the players — hours were 7-11 p.m. — the poker

players broke for about ten minutes for snacks and a little mild whiskey drinking. The players included Sid Benton, Lonnie Hall, Mike McCartney, Dr. Dick Miller, Maurice Renner, Dad, and Webb Williams. Alternates were Dr. Loyce Hathcock and Judge Maupin Cummings. These men were all cautious players, and it was rare that anyone lost (or won) more than 20 dollars. They had good times.

Fenner was a contributor to the community. Shortly after his arrival in Fayetteville, he was involved in the development of the Fayetteville Country Club on South Mountain. He was a deacon and usher in the First Presbyterian Church for years. He was a long-time member and then president of the Fayetteville Rotary Club. He was a past director of the Heritage Federal Savings and Loan Association, and was the treasurer for the Washington County chapter of the American Red Cross for decades. As an amputee, he was often called to the Fayetteville Veteran's Hospital to talk to recently arrived veterans who had lost a leg, to demonstrate that one can still lead an active life with that handicap.

He and Chatty lived to a ripe old age — they took care of his parents, who lived next door to them, as long as they could. Both parents died within four months of each other — Stella on January 3, 1953, and James Lincoln on May 21, 1953. My late wife Patsy and I moved into their house in 1954, when I joined the faculty of the University of Arkansas. When I left to go back to graduate school in Chicago, my sister Flossie and her husband, Joe Upchurch, moved in with their children. Now it's the home of David and Fenner (Upchurch) Russell — Fenner Stice's granddaughter and her tribe. So the house at 124 West Prospect was been in the family since 1916 — 100 years. (Young Fenner died unexpectedly in October 2014.)

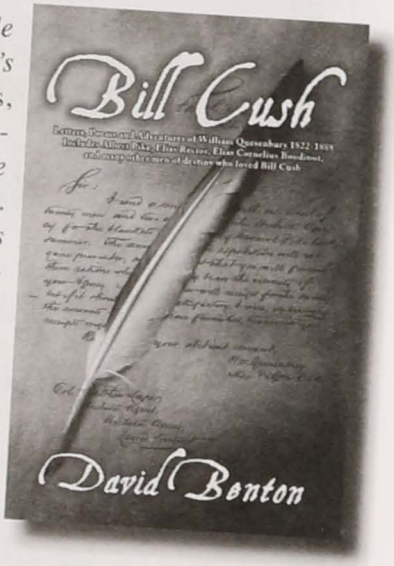
Florence Fenner Stice died on May 6, 1981, and Chatty died on June 28, 1985. Both are buried in the Fairview Cemetery in Fayetteville.

PHOTO COURTESY JAMES E. STICE

**Fenner Stice at Port Aransas, Texas, with his catch of the day.**

# Bill Cush
# 'Let Us Meet at Washington's Grave'
# The Story Behind the Poem

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is based on a chapter from David Benton's recently published book,* Bill Cush: Letters, Poems and Adventures of William Quesenbury, 1822-1888, *available from Black Rose Writing through Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com and other major bookstores. Benton is a great-great-grandson of William Quesenbury and has written historical articles for* Chronicles of Oklahoma, Florida Accent *and* Odyssey.

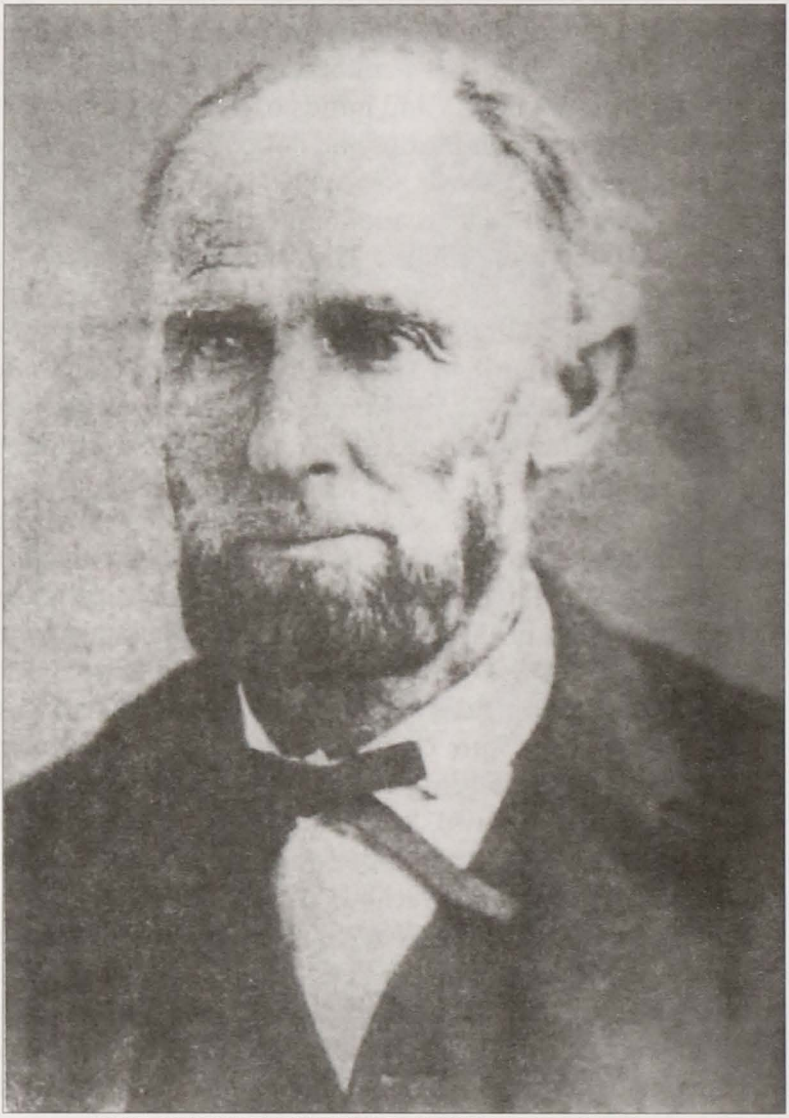



By David Benton

Although he was born William Minor Quesenbury in Fort Smith, Arkansas, August 21, 1822, his friends called him Bill Cush. As a journalist, Cush's articles and caricatures appeared in newspapers as far east as Baltimore and New York City. His reputation as editor, artist, poet, soldier and ardent adventurer was celebrated throughout Arkansas, in Indian Territory, Texas and Missouri.

In 1850 he left his wife and sons in Cane Hill, Arkansas, and set out for the California gold fields. He returned to Arkansas a year later. In 1853 he built a home in Fayetteville and established his own newspaper on the town square. During thirty-seven months of the *South-west Independent*, Bill Cush struck a chord that resonated beyond his own life and far into the twentieth century. His paper published until 1856.

A new era of politics began to emerge during the days of



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**William Minor Quesenbury, known to most as Bill Cush, as seen late in life. Quesenbury lived in Fayetteville, publishing, editing, writing and drawing for newspapers.**

Bill Cush's *South-West Independent*. As the final chapters of the 1850s numbered into the book of history revealing a turbulent new decade, Federalism, Free-soilism and abolitionism began striking terror in the hearts and minds of Southerners. The *ism* genies had got out of their bottles and nobody in the South knew how to put them back in.[1]

In 1856, James Buchanan and John C. Breckinridge headed the National Democratic ticket. The Whigs endorsed Millard Fillmore and Andrew J. Donelson. John C. Fremont was nominated to lead the budding Republican Party. Fremont's running mate, William L. Dayton, had defeated a large field of contenders for the vice-presidential nomination. Little notice was given to a tall, self-taught lawyer from Illinois among them called Abe Lincoln.[2]

The 1860 election year saw Cush back in the newspaper business. But he wasn't running his own sheet; he was on the staff of the Fayetteville *Arkansian*, a hard-core political journal that flew the colors of the Democratic Party. Since Cush was a Whig, his tenure at the *Arkansian* was short-lived.

Even before stepping down from the *Arkansian*, Cush was in print in the *Arkansas State Gazette* in Little Rock. It was a political device, a letter to Whig committee members W.H. Cousins and James W. Matthews. They had invited Cush to speak at a meeting organized to ratify the Bell-Everett presidential nomination, but their invitation reached Cush too late.

"Had it come in time," Cush wrote July 2, "I should have gone to your city. ... And had it been desirable, I should have taken pleasure in delivering myself of such remarks as might have been encouraging to our common glorious cause." Cush left little to the imagination regarding what he would have said to the Unionists had he been able to attend. "I am in for the war—" he proclaimed, "and for all wars in which my party may be engaged."[3]

Although Arkansas politics played hot and heavy during the summer and fall of 1860, the national political arena was hotter and heavier. The Democratic Party, fractured over slavery

and sectional issues, held two conventions and elected separate presidential candidates — Stephen A. Douglas for the liberal Northern wing, J.C. Breckinridge for the conservative Southern wing.[4]

Cush not only held a finger to the pulse of local and state politics, but national as well. In February 1861, he wrote to D.C. Williams, a Van Buren Merchant, about his grocery order that included star candles. After quibbling about prices Cush plunged into politics: "As to that part of your letter which is devoted to the exoneration of any old organization from the blame of our present distress, I must tell you, with all emphasis, that it is all humbug. The Democratic Party is the sole cause of the dismemberment of the Union and all its consequent troubles."[5]

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**A self-portrait by "Old Bill Cush" as a Cyclops.**

PHOTO BY WALTER J. LEMKE

**The Quesenbury family home at the crest of Duncan Avenue, just south of Center Street, built in 1854 and later the home of Daniel Harvey Hill, president of the Arkansas Industrial University.**

The previous fall, while the Democratic Party was busy performing the hara-kiri ritual, new enemies emerged offering incense and whetstone. The new Constitutional Union Party, raised from the ashes of "Whiggery" and "Know-Nothingism," placed John Bell at the head of their ticket. The unlikely Abraham Lincoln was the Republican candidate.[6] God was still in his heaven, but many of the familiar constellations had changed shape or had fallen from the sky and Southerners, for the most part, were navigating a turbulent political sea by the seat of their pants.

Yet it would not be fair to place blame for the chaos, especially in the Democratic ranks, solely on 1850s and 1860s politics — the problem had been in the making a long time. "Twenty odd years ago I foresaw the present state of things," Cush wrote to Williams. "I knew then that unless leopards change their spots etc., and man his nature, that when the Democratic Party went down, ruin would accompany it."[7]

Although the fledgling Republican Party made an unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 1856, outside Arkansas they were a party to be reckoned with. But even four years later they would have been hard pressed to win the White House against unified Democrats. As it were, the country divided over slavery and state's rights issues and Lincoln conquered.[8]

In December South Carolina left the Union and several other states followed. The following February the Confederate States of America was formed at Montgomery, Alabama, with Jefferson Davis at its head.[9] In his inaugural address to the Congress, President Davis said, "Our present political position has been achieved in a manner unprecedented in the history of nations. It illustrates the American idea that governments rest upon the consent of the governed, and that it is the right of the people to alter or abolish them at will, whenever they become destructive of the ends for which they were established."[10]

Ten days later President Lincoln told the American people he had "no purpose to interfere either directly or indirectly with the institution of slavery in states where it exists." He said, "I believe I have no lawful right to do so and I know I have no inclination to do so."[11]

But even before Lincoln's message, some Arkansans were willing to give him a chance.[12] Others, often bellicose, called for immediate secession. Some of the moderates advocated convening a secession convention. In January the Arkansas governor approved an act referring the convention question to the people. An election was set for February 18. The ballot would not only decide the convention issue, it would also elect delegates.[13] Early on the eighteenth Cush started a report to C.C. Danley at the *Gazette*:

> Dear Captain: Nothing whatever now, could be as acceptable to you as election reports. But I pen these few lines before breakfast this morning and before the voting has begun. I will drive away till the bell rings and then leave my epistle open till Wednesday's mail.

> When the news came that the legislature had called the convention it was supposed that nearly every other man would be a candidate. Yet there are not eight in the field, we have not a sufficiency for two tickets — our county being entitled to four representatives.[14]

David Walker and Col. Gunter were the Union candidates. Gunter was a lawyer who gained prominence in the November presidential election; Walker was well known all over the state as the leading spirit of the Whig party.

According to Cush, the election of these two Union men would have thoroughly chafed the secessionists in Washington County. He also described several other Unionists, including one candidate as a "sorter Unionist, sorter not." Then he wrote:

> As far as my individual preferences are concerned, of course, I would be transported to witness the election of my favorites; but I do not believe that, left to themselves, any of the candidates would actually destroy the country.[15]

Arkansans overwhelmingly favored a convention, and March 4 was set for the delegates to assemble. Two days later, after the votes were counted and the delegates named, Cush continued his report: "Day before yesterday the whole face of the earth in and about the town of Fayetteville was covered with people, and they all voted for the Union candidates."[16]

Four days before the convention Cush wrote to Williams, "I am afraid Arkansaw has gone. How could she do otherwise? Times are dull beyond toleration here. I enjoy myself however very much in reflections upon the discomfiture of the seceders about here. Verily, a man that appreciates fun as I do is happier than his neighbor. I wouldn't be as serious as you are, these times, for all the sugar and coffee you ever sold."[17]

When the convention convened in Little Rock on the first Monday in March, David Walker was elected chairman and E.C.

Boudinot secretary. Although speakers on both sides spoke eloquently over the next two and a half weeks, a small Union majority barely defeated efforts to align Arkansas with Jefferson Davis's new government. Unable to pass a secession ordinance, the convention adjourned until August.[18]

These must have been glorious days for Cush and the Unionists. But that euphoria was short-lived as state after state in the South followed South Carolina's lead and dumped the Union.

Even before the secession election, as the national architecture was dismantling state by state and the sequence of events threatened to bring Arkansas, Missouri and Indian Territory into the impending war, Cush pondered what part he would take in it. It's not hard to imagine him upstairs in his private study.

As he sat writing near a window in the flood of winter light, liquid emotions clung to his eyes. Passion aflame in his soul, words burned in his mind: *Liberty's fires: Let us not ruin but save. Broad strokes of his quill pen across paper: Let us stay war's red-rushing flood.* By the time he finished writing, the pale evening had surrendered to the glow of a star candle flickering in the semi-darkness of the small room.[19]

Early next day Cush scribbled a note to Jonas Tebbetts and posted it: "Tebbetts, My Dear Friend: The Union spirit came over me powerfully yesterday. Whether the foregoing will convey an idea of the state I was in, I can't say. I have sent it off for publication. Ever and since early yours, W.Q."[20]

A short poem, "Let Us Meet at Washington's Grave," accompanied the note:

Let us meet at Washington's grave,
Oh brother, of Washington's land,—
With a kind and brotherly heart
I give thee a brotherly hand:—
Shall the Hallowed past be forgot—
All swept in oblivion's deeps?—
Oh turn not away from the spot
Where Father Washington sleeps!

Forget if thou canst where he led,—
The fields where his followers lie,—
The true-hearted freemen that bled,
Oh brother, for you and I!
'Twas next to salvation the boon
Their blood and their sufferings gave,—
Shall their memories perish thus soon?
Let us meet at Washington's grave!

By the gore of Bunker Hill's height,
And havoc of Guilford's sad day,
By the death-work of Stony Point's night,
And York's triumphant array;—
By the tracks in the flint-frozen earth,—
By the unburied bones of the brave,—
By the moans at the desolate hearth,
Let us meet at Washington's grave!

By the souls which mid the dark strife
Burned bright with Liberty's fires,—
By the mothers whose breasts gave us life,—
By the grey hairs of patriot sires,—
By the prayers and hopes of the good,
Oh let us not ruin but save,—
Let us stay war's red rushing flood—
Let us meet at Washington's grave!

From the bleak barren hills of the north,
From the bright flashing streams of the west,
From the South's teeming furrow, stand forth,
Oh brother, with peace loving heart;
By the mercies of Heaven above
Let the Star-Spangled Banner yet wave,—
Let us bury our feuds in our love—
Let us meet at Washington's grave.[21]

Early in February armed citizens in Little Rock marched on

the U.S. Arsenal. From Arkansas men in the nation's capital, volleys of electric messages sang across newly installed telegraph wires between Memphis and Little Rock:

> The motives which impelled capture of forts in other states do not exist in ours. (Senators R.W. Johnson and W.K. Sebastian to Governor H.M. Rector).[22]
>
> Southern States which captured forts were in the act of seceding, were threatened with troops, and their ports and commerce endangered. Not so with us. (R.W. Johnson to R.H. Johnson and James B. Johnson).[23]
>
> For God's sake do not complicate matters by an attack. (Albert Pike and R.W. Johnson to John Pope).[24]

Over the next two days the tone of the messages began to change:

> "Don't attack arsenal unless success is certain. Repulse would be disgraceful." (R.W. Johnson and T.C. Hindman to H.M. Rector).[25]

As the messages flew, Governor Rector had already demanded surrender of the arsenal to prevent a bloody clash.[26] February 7, he offered Captain James Totten, in command of the arsenal, safe passage for himself and his men out of the state in any direction he wished to go.[27] The next day Totten surrendered.[28]

During the weeks that followed, armed Arkansas men seized U.S. installations at Napoleon, Pine Bluff and Fort Smith. They captured U.S. ordinance stores aboard steamers on the Arkansas River.[29]

At a time when events were moving faster than reason, Cush struggled to find some moral direction. In the end he cast his lot with the state he loved. At or near that moment, Fate played her hand.

Soon after news of the surrender of Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers, the cry for secession intensi-

fied. Citizens across Arkansas rallied. David Walker quickly issued a proclamation calling for the convention to assemble. The Union cause in Arkansas was all but lost.[30]

Even before the delegates got back to Little Rock, Cush had made up his mind. In a report to the *Gazette* he conceded Union defeat. As he vindicated his comrades and lauded their struggle to keep Arkansas Union, it seems he was defending his own struggle as well:

> Dear Danley: — Troubles, confusion, and war have come. The Union men fought against this state of things as became patriots. They would not throwaway, for the sake of a mere party triumph, the Priceless Legacy of their fathers. Events forced them to yield. To them they are now submissionists. In no other sense have they ever been, the taunts of shabby demagogues. ... The Union men have heretofore held the position of those who utter warnings against tampering with fire when the destruction of all that was valuable was threatened. Their warnings were unheeded and the conflagration has begun ... .
>
> There is nothing of local importance here. Everybody is trying to peer into the future. Anxiety will not hasten time; and if Lincoln or the South does not back down, there will be abundance of matter to interest and excite for many a day. For my own part I do not see how the issue can ever be settled. Both sides may be worried out by war, but that would not make them friends, or abate existing hatred, or put an end to the stealing of slaves. Can a war terminate until the causes that produced it are destroyed?
>
> We told our secession friends and abolition enemies that they were wrongly guiding the ship of State that they both were out the channel. The ship has foundered. The Unionists wished to make an effort to get her off. South Carolina put off in her long boat before

> she struck; Georgia followed: then Alabama, etc. These are now far out on the waves. The abolitionists stick to the wreck. Arkansas is about launching her long boat--about shoving off. It will be a glorious thing if a storm does not arise out of the great deep.[31]

Two days after Cush's report appeared in the *Gazette*, the delegates reassembled at the Old State House in Little Rock and passed an ordinance of secession. At 4:10 p.m. May 6, 1861, Arkansas lowered her long boat and shoved off.[32]

Late in May, Cush joined Albert Pike and rode under a Confederate flag making treaties with the Indian nations west of Arkansas.

The mighty vortex of winds and war raging east of the Mississippi River soon rolled west. Much of Missouri, Arkansas and Indian Territory would be crushed by the storm.

## Notes

1. *South-West Independent*, (Fayetteville, Ark.) January 28, 1854; *Arkansian*, (Fayetteville, Arkansas) March 12, March 19, 1859; Ross, Margaret Smith. *Arkansas Gazette, The Early Years*, (Arkansas Gazette Foundation: Little Rock, Ark.) 337.
2. William A. DeGregorio, *Complete Book of U.S. Presidents*, 216, 217.
3. *Arkansas Gazette*, (Little Rock, Ark.) July 14, 1860.
4. DeGregorio, *Book of U.S. Presidents*, 232-234; *Arkansian*, June 23, 1860.
5. Quesenbury to D.C. Williams, February 28, 1861, D.C. Williams Collection, Clara B. Eno Papers, Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock.
6. Lincoln served a single term in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1847-1849.
7. See note 5 above.
8. *Arkansian*, December 1, 1860.
9. Ashmore, Harry S. *Arkansas: a Bicentennial History*, (Norton: New York, 1978) 75.
10. "Mr. Davis' Inaugural," Montgomery, February 22, 1861: quoted in the *Arkansian* March 15, 1861. 12. "Mr. Lincoln's Inaugural," Washington, D.C., March 4, 1861: quoted in the *Arkansian* March 15, 1861.
11. "Mr. Lincoln's Inaugural," Washington, D.C., March 4, 1861: quoted in the *Arkansian* March 15, 1861.
12. *Arkansian*, November 9, 1860.
13. Ross, *Arkansas Gazette, The Early Years*, 351, 353, 354; Brown, *Albert Pike*, 349, 350; Dougan, *Confederate Arkansas*, 45.
14. *Arkansas Gazette*, March 2, 1861.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.

17. See note 5 above.
18. Ross, *Arkansas Gazette, The Early Years*, 354; Fletcher, John Gould. *Arkansas*, (University of North Carolina Press: Chapell Hill, 1947) 142; Dougan, Michael B. *Confederate Arkansas*, (University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, 1976) 47, 52, 55, 56; Ashmore, *Arkansas*, 75, 76.
19. J.H Van Hoose, "Bill Cush and his Times"; *Gazette*, March 9, 1855 (in Cush's tribute to the Marriage of Governor Roane); Gallaway, "For the Pleasure of His Friends," *Flashback*, Vol. 8 (October 1958), 15.
20. Quesenbury to Tebbetts, February 22, 1861. *Flashback*, Vol. 19 (February 1969), 20: 29 (November 1979), 14.
21. "Let Us Meet at Washington's Grave," Quesenbury Journal, February 21, 1861; *Flashback*, Vol. 19 (February, 1969), 20;"From Our Files," *Flashback*, Vol. 29 (November 1979), 14.
22. February 7, 1861, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, ser. 1, vol. 1, 681: hereafter cited as O.R.
23. Ibid., ser. 1, vol. 13, 681, 682.
24. Ibid., ser. 1, vol. 13, 682.
25. February 8, 1861, O.R., ser. 1, vol. 13, 683.
26. Rector to James Totten, February 6, 1861, O.R., ser. 1, vol. 13, 640.
27. Ibid., 644.
28. R.W. Johnson to R.H. Johnson, February 9, 1861, O.R., ser. 1, vol. 13, 683.
29. Reports: Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, O.R., ser. 1, vol. 1, 646-650.
30. Fletcher, *Arkansas*, 146.
31. *Arkansas Gazette*, May 4, 1861.
32. Ross, *Arkansas Gazette, The Early Years*, 354, 355, 356; Hindman to Jefferson Davis, May 6, 1861, O.R., ser. 1, vol. 1, 690.

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